



SJSU Lab Preschool Newsletter

December 2009

We wish you a wonderful and safe Holiday Season!

In this edition of the Preschool Newsletter:

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- Poem: “Nothing in my Bag Today”

Please Note:

Last Day of Preschool is Wednesday, December 2, 2009
School resumes Tuesday, February 2, 2010

**ATTENTION Holders of
Child Development Lab Clinic Parking Permit
CLINIC SPACES:**

The 1st floor Clinic and Preschool Lab Parking spots are available
when you have more than 1 child with you.

*If you do not have your 2nd or 3rd child with you,
please use the following places to park:*

- 20 minute parking available outside the 7th Street Garage
- 20 minute parking available inside the 7th Street Garage
- General Parking 3rd floor and above in the 7th Street Garage

The Value of Play

by J. Gonzalez-Mena, <http://www.education.com>

Play is an arena where children learn new skills and practice old ones, both physical and social. Through play they challenge themselves to new levels of mastery. They gain competence in all areas of development—increasing language, social skills, and physical skills, for example.

Play provides for cognitive development in ways that educational toys don't necessarily address. Cognitive development is tied in with physical and social interactions in the preschool years as children are constructing a view of the world and discovering concepts. So when you see your children running around, playing outdoors, seemingly doing nothing constructive, look deeper at what's really happening. There's nothing passive about play—even if the body is passive for a time, the mind is busy working. Children at play are active explorers of the environment as they create their own experience and grow to understand it. In this way they participate in their own development.

Through play, children work at problem solving, which involves mental, physical, and social skills. While playing, they can try on pretend solutions and experience how those solutions work. If they make mistakes, those mistakes don't hurt them as they would in real life. They can reverse power roles and be the adult for a change, telling other children what to do. They can even tell adults what to do, if the adults are willing to play along.

Play enables children to sort through conflicts and deal with anxieties, fears, and disturbing feelings in an active, powerful way. Play provides a safety valve for feelings. When they pretend, children can say or do things that they can't do in reality.

Play makes children feel powerful and gives them a sense of control as they create worlds and manipulate them. Watch children playing with blocks, or dolls and action figures, or even in the sandbox. Think about how they create the worlds they play in. What power!

Children also get a sense of power by facing something difficult and conquering it—like finding a place for a puzzle piece that just won't fit anywhere or climbing higher on the jungle gym than they've ever climbed before. Think back to your own childhood. Think of a time when you were challenged in play. What was your feeling as you overcame obstacles (including perhaps your own fear) and met the challenge?

How to Encourage Preschool Pretend Play

by Traci Geiser, <http://www.education.com>

Preschoolers love to pretend! Whether he is being a daddy with a new baby, or an astronaut blasting into outer space, the imagination of a child enables him to go on amazing adventures. This type of play is fun for young children, and supports important development, too! How can parents help encourage pretend play?

The Importance of Pretend Play

What do young children learn when they engage in pretend play?

- **Vocabulary Development and Communication** Children often pretend to be the people and situations they know. When groups of children play together, they have a wide variety of experiences to share with one another. In playing together, children actually teach each other new vocabulary words as they talk and play together. They learn about communication as they discuss ideas play out different scenarios.
- **Planning and Problem Solving** Children can come up with elaborate plans and solve complex problems as they play. Deciding who is going to play which part and then starting the adventure requires a great deal of planning. Children work together to solve the problems they encounter as they move along in the adventure.
- **Imagination and Creativity** It doesn't take much to spur children on to imaginative play. Children are naturally creative and can use the toys and items found around the house to substitute for most anything he might need. Allowing him the time and just a few props will allow your child to tap into his natural creativity and you will be amazed to see how far his imagination can take him.

Encouraging Pretend Play

"Creative play is the key to all learning," says Karey James, Drama Teacher at The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities. "If you allow a child to be creative and express themselves, you are spurring a deep-rooted curiosity in the world and a desire to learn all there is to learn!" A few simple props combined with the imagination of a child are sure to result in hours of creative play.

Set the Stage

Children find the "material" for their pretend play from books, educational field trips and even everyday life. If your child shows interest in a particular topic, encourage him to focus his play around the topic. A trip to the aquarium might lead your child to go on an undersea adventure. Reading books about fish, diving or the ocean or watching themed movies will provide more information for your child to include in his "script".

Provide Props

A few simple props will spur your little guy on to play imaginatively. A restaurant can be made with a table, some play food, a menu (which your child can create), an apron and some play money. You might be the first patron of his new restaurant, asking him what the specials are and how much money different items cost.

Here are a few simple theme ideas:

- *Zoo.* Plastic or stuffed animals, blocks for building cages, zookeeper hat or vest
- *Hospital.* Prescription pad, doctor kit, a blanket and pillow, play food
- *Beauty Shop.* Hair rollers, hair dryer, brushes and combs, barrettes and hair clips
- *School.* Crayons and pencils, desk or table, alphabet, books, a bell
- *Travel/Airplane.* Chairs, pillows and blankets, snacks for the plane, suitcases, maps, postcards

Simplify your Schedule

The most important gift you can give your child is the gift of time. Be mindful of involving your child in so many activities, that there is no time for play. Children who are not given the time to play often cannot entertain themselves. Creativity and imagination need time to blossom, be sure to block some time off in your schedule for open-ended play.

Provide your child with some background information and a few simple props and give him time to unleash his creativity. Then sit back with a cup of coffee and delight in all that he comes up with. The creativity and imagination of children is magical: enjoy it!

Nothing in My Bag Today

~Author Unknown~

Today I did math and science,
I toasted bread.
I halved and quartered.
I counted, measured, used my eyes, and ears, and head.
I added and subtracted on the way,
I used a magnet, blocks, and memory tray.
I learned about a rainbow and how to weigh.
So please don't say, "Anything in your bag today?"
You see I'm sharing as I play.

I learned to listen and speak clearly when I talk,
To wait my turn, and when inside to walk.
To put my thoughts into a phrase,
To guide a crayon through a maze.
To find my name and write it down,
To do it with a smile and not a frown.
To put my painting brush away,
So please don't say, What, "Nothing in your bag today?"

I've learned about a snail and worm,
Remembered how to take my turn.
I helped a friend when he was stuck,
Learned that water rolls off a duck.
I looked at words from left to right,
Agreed to differ not to fight.
So please don't say, "Did you only play today?"



Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns.

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924-3727 office

924-3726 **kitchen

**If you need to get a hold of me during class time, please call the kitchen phone.

I do not answer my office phone while the children are present.